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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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KIEV FOR USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [BO](#)

SUBJECT: Russian Printing Press Stops Producing Independent  
Belarusian Newspapers

Ref: 2005 Minsk 1193

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED: PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

1. (SBU) Summary: The Smolensk Printing Plant annulled its contracts with independent newspapers Narodnaya Volya (NV), BDG Gazeta, and the democratic Communist Party of Belarus' Tovarishch on March 13, citing an overwhelming workload. The plant director later stated that the annulments were due to the papers' failure to pay their debts and their opposition activities. Editors of the newspapers consider the move politically motivated and believe the GOB found a way to influence Smolensk authorities. The Smolensk